

Headline	Display of true grit		
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# Display of true grit

Sixteen disabled persons gain entry into USM, while 10 get accepted into UUM as both varsities welcome their new batch of students for the 2016/2017 academic year. > 3



**Double excitement:** Visually impaired sisters Felicia Pui Jia Yin, 21, (red) and Andrea Pui Jia Hui, 20, (blue) with their parents (from left) Leo Pui Jung Kie and Teresa Wong being greeted by USM deputy vice-chancellor (research and innovation) Prof Datuk Dr Muhamad Jantan during the 2016/2017 intake session at the USM main campus in Penang. — ASRI ABDUL GHANI/The Star

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# Pursuing a better future

A total of 26 disabled persons accepted into USM and UUM

By **LOGEISWARY THEVADASS and G.C. TAN**

TWO visually impaired sisters are heading for a better future when they enrolled in Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM).

Felicia Pui Jia Yin, 21, and sibling Andrea Pui Jia Hui, 20, have been accepted by USM to pursue a similar degree course in English For Professionals.

Felicia said they were grateful for the offer even though they failed to get their first preference, which was Special Education Programme.

"We are still happy and are looking forward to pursue the course. I want to be a lecturer when I graduate.

"The environment is still new to us and we will try to adapt ourselves at the campus," she said at the 2016/2017 academic intake session at the USM main campus in Penang yesterday.

Andrea, who aspires to be a music teacher, said she would try to help and motivate other disabled persons.

"Our disability has never been an excuse for us to not succeed."

The sisters, who hail from Sarawak, moved to Penang with their parents to study at St George's Girls' High School in Penang.

Due to their visual impairment, the sisters study by reading materials in large print.

Their beaming parents, Leo Pui Jung Kie, 49, and wife Teresa Wong, 55, said they were proud of both their daughters' achievement.

"We always believe that if God closes a door, another opens. And it is proven true in this case.

"We know that our daughters are gifted as they aced in all of their major exams in school," said Leo, who works in the security services line.

USM deputy vice-chancellor (research and innovation) Prof Datuk Dr Muhamad Jantan, who represented USM vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Omar Osman, said 3,654 undergraduates, including 16 disabled people, were enrolled in this new intake in USM's three campuses.

"We have also selected 364 students chosen under our University Social Responsibility programme that gives students from underprivileged families a chance to further their studies here," he told reporters.

In SINTOK, Kedah, two youths with cerebral palsy showed their grit to get a

university education by enrolling at Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM).

Muhammad Farid Anuar, 21, and R. Thendabani, 20, both from Johor, were among 4,114 new students, including eight other disabled students, who registered for the

2016/2017 academic year at the campus.

Muhammad Farid is pursuing an Event Management course, while Thendabani signed up for Information Technology.

Muhammad Farid said he has finally achieved his dream of getting a university education like his younger brother, who is presently studying at Universiti Malaysia Sabah.

"I am confident that I will get used to the environment here as I have been living an independent life. I never regard myself as a disabled person," said the youth from Tampoi.

Thendabani, from Muar, said he chose to study Information Technology as he aspired to be a software engineer.

"I have great spirit to study at UUM. However, my approach towards learning will be different from others due to the movement and communication problems I face.

"Due to my slow writing speed, I will make an audio recording of the lectures in class and write the notes down later," he explained.

Three orang asli were also among the new students.

Wa Yohana a/p Bah Ngah, 20, whose father is a rubber tapper, said she wished to be a role model for her siblings and students from her Semai community in her village in Maran, Pahang.

"I never thought I would be accepted into a university as there are many other applicants. I hope to excel to change the future of my

family," said Wa Yohana, who aspires to be a lecturer.

The former SMK Maran student, who is the fifth of six siblings, is taking a degree course in Social Work Management.

UUM vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Seri Dr Mohamed Mustafa Ishak said 3,153 or 77% of the new students were females compared to 961 males.

He said a reason why there were more female students at UUM was because it was a trend for their male counterparts to take up studies in technical fields elsewhere.



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Freshmen  
bringing  
essential  
items with  
them  
during  
USM's  
2016/2017  
academic  
intake  
session at  
USM main  
campus in  
Gelugor,  
Penang.  
— Photos:  
ASRI ABDUL  
GHANI and  
G.C. TAN/  
The Star

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(From left) Prof Dr Mohamed Mustafa chatting with Thendabani, Muhammad Farid and Wa Yohana during the new students' registration for the academic year 2016/2017 at Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) in Sintok, Kedah.



Some of the freshies getting familiarised with the campus in USM, Penang.